

(Washington, DC)— Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Wisc.) today commemorated Veterans Day by honoring the courageous service and sacrifice of America's veterans.

"Our nation's service members make tremendous sacrifices to protect the freedoms that Americans treasure so deeply," Congresswoman Moore said. "While they are always in our minds and our hearts, Veterans Day is a special time to recognize those who stand on the front lines, and thank them for what they and their families have had to give up as a result.

"The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have stretched our service members and military families thin. Since September 2001, nearly two million U.S. troops have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, about 29,000 of them from Wisconsin alone. That's 29,000 soldiers whose families worry constantly for their safety, 29,000 soldiers who have to miss their children's birthdays and graduations, and 29,000 soldiers who have been added to the veterans community in Wisconsin and need our support.

"I am proud of my colleagues in Congress for working diligently to pass legislation that rewards our veterans' commitment to our nation, and ensures they have access to quality health care, education and career opportunities.

"And of course, this Veterans Day, my thoughts and prayers are with the families of those whose loved ones have been lost in service to our nation, including the two Wisconsin soldiers killed last week in the tragic events at Fort Hood, Staff Sgt. Amy Krueger and Capt. Russell Seager."

The Democratic Congress has made a commitment to provide for the needs of America's troops, their families, and our nation's veterans, and has enacted several key pieces of legislation that have helped veterans secure jobs, benefits and medical care:

Veterans began to receive benefits from the new G.I. Bill, restoring the promise of a full four-year education to men and women who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and their families.

The Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act will allow Congress to approve funding for veterans' medical care a year in advance to ensure that the VA has adequate time to plan for the best way to deliver efficient and effective health care to our veterans.

The budget continues building on our historic commitment to veterans' health care. It provides the largest funding increase (nearly 12 percent) ever requested by a President in order to increase the number of VA doctors and nurses, expand VA mental health screening and treatment, and end the Bush Administration ban on enrolling modest-income veterans for VA health care.

The Recovery Act offered businesses a tax credit for hiring out-of-work veterans, made much-needed improvements to veterans' hospitals, and provided disabled veterans with a payment of \$250.

The Defense Authorization bill gives our troops a 3.4% pay raise, increases military readiness, and supports military families by increasing funding for housing programs.

Congresswoman Moore's priorities have also been to increase mental health services for veterans and their families. She has worked to ensure there is adequate mental health screening for all service members returning from the war theater, and to combat the stigma of receiving mental health treatment. In addition, Congresswoman Moore has worked to ensure that service members are not wrongly discharged for behavior actually related to undiagnosed and untreated PTSD. There are currently more than 427,000 veterans living in Wisconsin, and more than 23 million in the United States. As of June 2009, the number of U.S. veterans receiving treatment for PTSD was 354,326.

The number of Afghanistan veterans returning home from war with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is between 6 and 11 percent, and the number of Iraq war veterans returning with PTSD is between 12 and 20 percent.

###

For an interview with Congresswoman Gwen Moore, please contact Marni Goldberg at 202-593-8574.